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ABSTRACT

This guide, which gives an overview of federally funded vocational rehabilitation programs available in New Mexico, was developed for clients and potential clients of vocational rehabilitation services. Written in a simple and clear manner, the manual outlines the goals of rehabilitation: independence, self-management, self-advocacy, and employment. It describes the five agencies established under the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Commission for the Blind, New Vistas Independent Living Center, Projects with Industry, and the Client Assistance Program. Eligibility requirements are outlined for each agency. Guidelines are offered for appealing the eligibility determination, planning the rehabilitation program, acquiring independent living services, and working well with counselors. Clients are encouraged to become self-advocates, and checklists are provided to enable clients to assess their need for learning independent living skills and job skills. Also discussed are client rights and responsibilities, record-keeping, and social skills. A worksheet is provided to help clients work through problems, and problem-solving services of the Client Assistance Program are noted. (JDD)

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GUIDE TO REHABILITATION SERVICES AND SELF ADVOCACY

Client Assistance Project

Protection and Advocacy System

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GUIDE TO REHABILITATION SERVICES
and
SELF-ADVOCACY MANUAL

by Jamie McAlister

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INTRODUCTION

This guide was developed for clients and potential clients of vocational rehabilitation services in New Mexico. It gives an overview of federally-funded vocational rehabilitation programs that are available in this state. Any person with a disability has the right to apply for services from the programs and agencies discussed in this manual.

This manual is intended to be accessible to a broad range of persons with disabilities. Because some persons with disabilities require reading material that is simple and clear, this manual has been written at an appropriate level. It is not intended to be offensive to individuals who have a more complex reading level. It is hoped that all readers of this manual will understand the importance of making this information accessible to as many persons with disabilities as possible.

This manual was produced for the Client Assistance Project (CAP) of the Protection and Advocacy System, Inc., in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Permission is granted to reproduce all or part of the contents of this manual for training or educational purposes, provided that credit is given to the author (Jamie McAlister) and the CAP program at Protection and Advocacy System.

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WHAT IS A DISABILITY?

The word "disability" means that a person's body or mind works in a different way from what most people think is normal. Most of the time people think that "disability" means that the person who is disabled can't do something. For example, if a person is blind, most people think that only means a person can't see.

Disability doesn't really mean can't. A blind person can do almost everything that a person who sees can do. But, the blind person will do things differently than a person who sees does things. A blind person and a person who sees can both enjoy books. A person who sees will read a book with his or her eyes. A blind person will read a book by listening to a tape recording of the book or by using brailled books (Brailled books are books printed with raised dots that the person feels with his or her hand. The dots are a system just like English that helps a blind person read.)

If you have a disability, your body or mind will work in a different way. You may need to make changes in how you do things, but you can still do most things you want to do.

Many people think that if you have a disability, you need someone to take care of you. This is not always true. You may need some help with some things. But, once you are an adult, you can usually take care of yourself. You will need to learn how to take care of yourself. This manual can give you information about services that will help you do that.

REHABILITATION

When you have a disability, life is different for you. You may not be able to live, work, or play in the same way a person who does not have a disability lives, works, or plays. You may need to find help in doing the things you want to do. Going to school, finding a job, or living more independently may be hard. You may experience discrimination from other people. Schools and employers may not want to work with you.

Just because your life is different, it does not mean that your life is bad or meaningless. You can still live and work and play when you have a disability. You may need help in doing the things you want, but you can still do them. Some of the help you may need is called "rehabilitation". Rehabilitation means teaching and training a person how to work with his or her disability. It means helping a person learn a skill and get a job. It means helping a person live more independently. Rehabilitation means helping you, in any way you need, to keep living, working, and playing if you are disabled.

GOALS OF REHABILITATION

First Rehabilitation Goal

Rehabilitation has several goals. The first, and most important one, is independence. Independence means you make your own decisions about your life. No one else may make decisions for you. You may ask people to help you make decisions, but you make the final decision. You have a right to live independently and to make your own decisions about your life. Rehabilitation is designed to help you become as independent as possible. When you are independent, you make your own decisions, and you are responsible for yourself. You have the same rights and responsibilities as any adult.

Second Rehabilitation Goal

The second goal of rehabilitation is self-management. Self-management means you decide how to work with your disability. You decide what kind of help you need. Whatever disability you have, your disability will require you to make some changes. You will need to learn how to manage your disability. You will need to learn how to work with people who do not have a disability. You will need to learn what you can do for yourself and what you need other people to do for you. For example, a person who is deaf will need to learn how to tell when the telephone is ringing. A deaf person will need to learn how to work with a sign language interpreter. A person who uses a wheelchair will need to learn how to move from the wheelchair to a bed. He or she may need to learn how to use a personal care attendant. Each disability has special changes that need to be made. You will need to learn how to make those changes so you can still do the things you want to do. Rehabilitation has the goal of teaching you how to do that.

Third Rehabilitation Goal

The third goal of rehabilitation is self-advocacy. Self-advocacy means standing up for yourself. Many people do not understand disability. They are afraid of people with disabilities. Sometimes schools and employers refuse to accept students with disabilities or hire employees who have disabilities. You need to learn how to stand up for yourself so that you can do the things you want to do. You need to become a self-advocate so that other people cannot stop you from getting a job, or an education, or living where you want to live.

Fourth Rehabilitation Goal

The fourth goal of rehabilitation is getting a job. Almost everyone wants a job. A job brings money and personal satisfaction. Rehabilitation can give you the training, work experience, and support you need to get a job and keep your job. Rehabilitation should not decide what job is best for you. You make the decision about what kind of job you can do and what kind of job you want.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Federal Government has passed a law called "The Rehabilitation Act of 1973." This law gives government money to every state to set up a rehabilitation program. The program is for persons with disabilities. It can help persons with disabilities to increase their ability to get a job. This means that a rehabilitation program can help you get a job and keep your job. It can help you become more independent. It can help you do the things you choose, the same people without a disability do. It can help you do things with people who do not have a disability.

The law sets up certain rules. It gives rules for deciding who can get rehabilitation services. It gives rules about how persons with disabilities are given help. It gives rules about how the state must set up its program. It gives rules about your rights and the things you must be helped with. It also gives rules about what you must do to get services. .

Rehabilitation Agencies

In New Mexico there are five agencies that are set up because of this law: The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Commission for the Blind (CB), New Vistas Independent Living Center (NVILC), Projects with Industry (PWI), and the Client Assistance Program (CAP). These agencies are good places to go for help. If you are blind or partially sighted you should go to the Commission for the Blind (CB). If you have a physical or mental disability, or you are deaf or hearing impaired, you should go to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). We will talk about all these agencies and their programs later in this manual.

One of the programs the law also sets up is the Client Assistance Program (CAP). The Client Assistance Program (CAP) will help you if you have problems getting the services you need from other rehabilitation agencies. Help from the Client Assistance Program (CAP) is free. We will talk about CAP later in this manual.

Part of the law also sets up rules to protect your rights. It is against the law for a school or an employer, who gets money from the Federal Government, to refuse to accept you or hire you only because of your disability. You need to know that you have certain rights. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 makes it illegal for you to be discriminated against because of your disability.

Rehabilitation is for persons with disabilities. When you get rehabilitation services, you get the help you need to learn how to do a job, find a job, keep a job, and live more independently.

The Federal Government has passed a law that helps states set up rehabilitation agencies. In New Mexico, the two biggest agencies that operate rehabilitation programs are: The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and The Commission of the Blind (CB). The law also gives you certain rights. It is illegal to discriminate against you because of your disability. The law sets up the Client Assistance Program (CAP) to help you if you have problems getting the rehabilitation services you need. If you want a copy of the law, you can get a copy from DVR, CB or the CAP.

In this manual, we will talk about each rehabilitation agency that receives federal money. We will talk about how you can become a client of each program and what services each program can give you. We will, also, talk about what to do if you do not like what is happening with your rehabilitation program.

REHABILITATION SERVICES IN NEW MEXICO

Rehabilitation Agencies and Programs

There are five agencies in New Mexico that get federal money through the rehabilitation law. These five agencies are: Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Commission for the Blind (CB), New Vistas Independent Living Center (NVILC), Projects with Industry (PWI), and the Client Assistance Program (CAP). The CAP works with clients of the four other agencies above to help solve problems. We will talk about each agency and how you can become a client of each agency. A client is someone who gets services from an agency.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is the biggest rehabilitation agency in New Mexico. DVR is here to serve persons with disabilities. Its goal is to give services to persons with disabilities to help them get a job, keep a job, or live more independently. DVR can help a person with disabilities with training, or counseling, or other things he or she might need to get a job. Many of the things DVR can do for a person with disabilities are free. Sometimes, if the person has enough money to pay for services or has insurance, DVR will ask the person to help with the cost of his or her program. If you have a disability that is not an eye disability, you can ask DVR for help.

Commission for the Blind

The Commission for the Blind (CB) is a lot like DVR. CB is also a rehabilitation agency in New Mexico. CB is here to serve people who are blind or who have a very hard time seeing. Its goal is to give services to help persons with an eye disability get a job, keep a job, or live more independently. CB can do the same things DVR can do, but only for people who have an eye disability. Many of the things CB can do for a person are free. Sometimes, if the person can help pay or has insurance, CB will ask the person to help with the cost of his or her program. If you are blind or have a very hard time seeing, you can ask CB for help.

New Vistas Independent Living Center

New Vistas Independent Living Center (NVILC) is here to give services to anyone with a disability to help him or her live more independently. NVILC can help a person with a disability learn how to live on his or her own. It can also help a person learn how to get the services he or she needs, and how to make his or her own decisions. NVILC gives the following services: counseling, help in finding and hiring a personal care attendant (someone who can help you take care of body needs), finding a place to live, and help in learning how to be a self-advocate. Most of the things NVILC can do for a person with disabilities are free. If you are disabled, you can ask NVILC for help.

Projects With Industry

Projects With Industry (PWI) is another rehabilitation program. PWI is here in New Mexico to serve any person who has a disability and who is having a hard time finding a job. Its goal is to give services to persons with disabilities to find a job and learn how to do that job. PWI can help a person find a job and train for the job. It can also help a person get other services he or she needs to keep a job. PWI works with businesses, throughout New Mexico, and helps businesses understand how important it is to hire people with disabilities. PWI services are free. If you want a job right away and you are disabled, you can ask PWI for help.

The Client Assistance Program

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) is here to help people who have problems with any of the programs we have talked about. Its goal is to help persons with disabilities get the services they need from DVR, CB, NVILC, or PWI. It can help you solve problems with your counselor. It can help get you services you need from DVR, CB, NVILC, or PWI. And, it can answer any questions you have about any of the rehabilitation agencies we have talked about. If you have questions, or want help with a problem, you can ask CAP for help. CAP services are free.

On the next page, there is a list of all the addresses and phone numbers of the rehabilitation agencies we talked about above. After you decide which one you want, you should call the office that is closest to where you live.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation(DVR)

Taos Satellite Office
205A Cruz Alta Road
Taos, NM 87571
(505) 758-4342 (V/TDD)

Las Vegas Satellite Office
700 Friedman Avenue
Las Vegas, NM 87701
(505) 425-9365 (V/TDD)

Espanola Satellite Office
College Plaza
1105B Paseo De Onate
Espanola, NM 87532
(505) 753-2908 (V/TDD)

Farmington Satellite Ofc.
101 West Animas
Farmington, NM 87401
(505) 327-5123 (V/TDD)

Santa Fe District Office
604 W. San Mateo
Santa Fe, NM 87503
(505) 827-3527 (V/TDD)

Alamogordo Satellite Ofc.
2515 N. White Sands Blvd.
Alamogordo, NM 88310
(505) 437-6550 (V/TDD)

Silver City Satellite Ofc.
Hudson Street Plaza
315 Hudson, #26
Silver City, NM 88061
(505) 538-5351 (V/TDD)

Las Cruces District Office
225 E. Idaho, #26 & 27
Las Cruces, NM 88001
(505) 524-6135 (V/TDD)

Roswell District Office
200 W. First Street, 7th Floor
Roswell, NM 88201
(505) 624-6024 (V/TDD)

Albuquerque Heights District Office
Two Park Central Tower
300 San Mateo, NE, Suite 320
Albuquerque, NM 87108
(505) 841-4560 (V/TDD)

Albuquerque Rio Grande District Ofc.
2221 Rio Grande, NW
Albuquerque, NM 87104
(505) 841-8752 (V/TDD)

Isleta Satellite Office
2750 Isleta Blvd., SW
Albuquerque, NM 87105
(505) 841-8800 (V/TDD)

Belen Satellite Office
480 Rio Communities Blvd.
Belen, NM 87002
(505) 864-1617 (V/TDD)

Gallup Satellite Office
211 W. Mesa, Suite #5
Gallup, NM 87301
(505) 722-6045 (V/TDD)

Clovis Satellite Office
Bruce King Complex
904 W. Sixth Street
Clovis, NM 88101
(505) 763-3437 (V/TDD)

Hobbs Satellite Office
2120 North Alto
Hobbs, NM 88240
(505) 392-5270 (V/TDD)

Carlsbad Satellite Office
304-15 North Canyon
Carlsbad, NM 88220
(505) 885-8821 (V/TDD)

COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

CB State Office
PERA Building, Room 205
Santa Fe, N.M. 87503
(505) 827-4479

Albuquerque Field Office
2200 Yale Blvd., S.E.
Albuquerque, N.M. 87106
(505) 841-8853

Alamagordo Field Office
408 White Sands Blvd.
Alamagordo, N.M. 88310
(505) 437-8008

Roswell Field Office
200 W. 1st St., Room 740
Roswell, N.M. 88201

Las Vegas Field Office
700 Friedman Ave.
Las Vegas, N.M. 87701
(505) 425-3546

NEW VISTAS INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (NVILC)

New Vistas ILC
2025 South Pachico, #110
Santa Fe, N.M. 87501
(505) 471-1001 (V/TDD)

New Vistas ILC
1020 Lomas, N.W.
Albuquerque, N.M. 87102
(505) 843-7681 (V/TDD)

New Vistas ILC
1700 Luna
Las Cruces, N.M. 88001
(505) 521-4133

Projects with Industry

Southwest Business, Industry and Rehabilitation Association
1101 Cardenas, NE, #105
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505) 265-9336

Career Services for the Handicapped
4401-A Lomas NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505) 2;65-7936 (V/TDD)

Client Assistance Program

Protection and Advocacy
2201 San Pedro NE, Bldg. 4, Suite 140
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505) 888-0111 V/TDD (Albuquerque Area)
1-800-432-4682 V/TDD (other areas, toll-free)

BECOMING A CLIENT

Each rehabilitation agency has rules for becoming a client. When you apply to a rehabilitation agency, it will make a decision about your eligibility. Eligibility means that you meet all the rules for becoming a client. If you do not meet the rules, then you are not eligible for services and the agency cannot help you. It is important for you to know what the rules are for eligibility.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Commission for the Blind (CB)

DVR and CB have the same rules for becoming a client. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a law made by the government, tells DVR and CB what rules to use for people who want to become clients. When you become a client, you are eligible for services, and the agency will help you. When the agency uses the rules to decide if you are eligible, it is called an "eligibility determination." DVR or CB must decide three things about you:

***Do you have a physical or mental disability?**

***Does your disability make it very hard for you or stop you from getting a job or keeping a job?**

***Is there a good chance that if you get help from DVR or CB you will be able to find a job and keep a job, or live more independently?**

If you have a disability and your disability makes it hard to find a job and keep a job, you may be able to become a client of DVR or CB. If you meet the rules and want help, you must first call the DVR or CB office that is closest to where you live. A list of all DVR and CB offices is on pages 15-26, and is also at the back of this manual. When you call that office ask for an application. The office will mail you an application, or you can go to the office for the application yourself. When you get this application, fill it out and return it to the office. When the office gets your application, they will set up an appointment for you with a counselor.

The first appointment with your counselor is very important. Your counselor will explain your rights and will tell you what information he or she needs to make your "eligibility determination." You should bring with you the names and addresses of all your doctors and any papers you have about your disability. Your counselor will send you to other doctors for tests. These tests will help your counselor make a decision about your eligibility. You do not have to pay for the tests. DVR or CB must pay the doctors for you. These doctors will only do tests to see if you are eligible. They should not give you treatment or send you to other doctors without permission from DVR or CB. Your counselor can ask you to take any test he or she decides is important. If you refuse to take a test that your counselor wants, you may not be considered for services. It is important that you take all the tests your counselor wants you to take. If you have a problem with a test, you should talk about it with your counselor.

When your counselor has all the information from the tests, he or she will make a decision about your eligibility. Your counselor can decide one of three things:

1. Yes, you are eligible and can become a client.
2. No, you are not eligible and cannot become a client.
3. Maybe you are eligible but your counselor needs more information to be sure.

If you are eligible, you can get the help you need to find a job and keep a job, or live more independently. If your counselor says you are not eligible, and you do not agree, you can appeal the decision. Page 63 shows you how to appeal. You can also ask CAP for help. CAP may be able to get DVR or CB to change the decision about your eligibility. If your counselor says maybe you are eligible, you may go into "extended evaluation" for up to 18 months. Your counselor will set up more tests to help him or her make a decision.

New Vistas Independent Living Center (NVILC)

New Vistas Independent Living Center has only a few rules for becoming a client. NVILC must decide three things about you:

* **Do you have a physical or mental disability?**
* **Does your disability make daily living hard?**
* **Do you need help in living more independently?**

Almost all persons with disabilities meet the rules for becoming a client with New Vistas Independent Living Center. You can become a client by calling the office nearest to where you live. The person you talk to on the phone will ask you some questions and can help you fill out any forms NVILC needs. When the forms are filled out, NVILC will set up an appointment for you with a staff member. You and the staff member will decide what help you need. CAP can help you if you have problems with NVILC.

Projects With Industry (PWI)

Projects With Industry has the same rules for giving services as DVR or CB. PWI must decide three things about you:

* **Do you have a physical or mental disability?**
* **Does your disability make it very hard for you to get a job and keep a job, or stop you from getting a job?**
* **Is there a good chance that if you get help from PWI you will be able to get a job?**

PWI will ask you for some information about yourself. If you need a test or a doctor's examination, PWI will make plans for that. PWI will want to know what kind of job you want. When PWI decides you are eligible for services, PWI will help you with training for a job and finding the job you want. CAP can help you if you have problems with PWI.

YOUR REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Each rehabilitation agency has rules you must follow in order to be eligible for services. Some of the rules are the same in every agency. Some of the rules are different. It will take time for the rehabilitation agency you have chosen to work with to make a decision about your eligibility. The decision about your eligibility for services may take four months or more. When the program has made a decision, you have the right to get the decision in writing. If the agency says that you are not eligible for services, you have the right to "appeal" the decision. Appeal means that you ask someone in a higher position to look over the decision. Sometimes the person who looks over the decision changes the decision. Sometimes the person will not change the decision. If you have problems with your eligibility decision, you can ask the CAP to help you. The CAP's phone number is 888-0111 (Albuquerque) or 1-800-432-4682 (New Mexico). If you want to learn how to appeal a decision, turn to page 63 of this manual.

Planning Your Rehabilitation Program

When any of the rehabilitation agencies we have talked about decide you are eligible for services, you and your counselor will make a plan for helping you. DVR and CB make a plan called the "Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan" (IWRP). This plan sets your goal for the job you want and what things you need in order to get the job. The plan shows what services you will get to help you get ready for a job. The plan is written just for you. It includes your responsibilities. It includes DVR's or CB's responsibilities to help you.

You have a right to work with your counselor to help make this plan. In fact, the law says that you must help make the plan. When the plan is finished, your counselor will ask you to sign your plan. Do not sign your plan if it does not have all the help you need in it. If your plan meets your needs, then sign it. If your needs change in the future, you should ask your counselor to change your IWRP. Your IWRP can be changed if you need new help. You have a right to get a copy of your IWRP. It is always a good idea to ask for a copy of your IWRP. If you have problems with your IWRP, you can ask the CAP for help. The CAP may be able to help you and your counselor make an IWRP that will meet your needs better.

New Vistas Independent Living Center (NVILC) and Projects With Industry (PWI) do not always use an IWRP. Sometimes, they will use different forms for making a plan to help you. But, both NVILC and

PWI do make a plan just for you. You have a right to help make that plan. You have a right to get a copy of the plan.

Planning your rehabilitation program is very important. Without a good plan you will not be able to reach your goal. It is important that you are part of making the plan. No one should make a plan without you. You should make the decisions about your life. When you make decisions you need all the information you can get. You should ask your counselor, and other people you trust, for information and advice about your plan. But, you are responsible for making your own plans for your life. When you make your plan make sure it includes everything you need to reach your goal. If you have questions or worries about your plan, talk with your counselor. If your counselor does not answer your questions, or cannot help you with your worries, you can get help at the CAP. Take all the time you need to make a good plan. Do not hurry. Making a good IWRP is a very important step in your rehabilitation program. You must not sign your IWRP until it has everything you need to reach your goal.

Services You Need To Reach Your Goal

DVR, CB, and PWI have services to help learn to do a job, you get a job, or keep a job. NVILC has services to help you live more independently. Sometimes, DVR and CB may also be able to help you get services to live more independently.

Before you can decide what services you need, you must decide what your rehabilitation goal is. The next chapter in this manual can help you decide about your goal. Your counselor can also help you. Your counselor may ask you to take a test that will help you make decisions about your goal. Once you know what your rehabilitation goal is, then you can decide what things you need to help you reach your goal.

Each person is different. Each person who becomes a client of a rehabilitation agency will have a different goal. Each person will make a different IWRP. Each person will need different services to reach his or her own goal. You should not compare the services you need with the services other people need. Your goal will be different. It is important for you to get the services you need to reach your goal. It is not important for you to get the same services other people get.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Commissions for the Blind (CB) will be able to give you the services on the next page or other services if they are needed to help you reach your goal.

DVR AND CB SERVICES

* **Counseling and Guidance:** advice and help about problems, or help in making decisions about your rehabilitation and goals

* **Physical or Mental Restoration:** help needed to make a disability less of a block or to keep it from getting worse

* **Maintenance:** help with living expenses or transportation costs

* **Personal Services:** readers, sign language interpreters, note takers or personal care attendant costs

* **Training:** school tuition, book costs, on-the-job training, or other things you need to be trained for the job you want

* **Equipment or Goods:** tools, books, supplies, and other things you need for a job

* **Job Placement:** help to learn job-finding skills, information about jobs you can apply for, or help to learn interviewing skills

* **Post-employment Services:** help in keeping your job or finding a new job after you have already been employed

Special Programs

DVR and CB have two special programs you need to know about. The first one is called the "School-to-Work Transition Program". This program is for people with disabilities who are still in high school. If you meet the eligibility rules of DVR and CB, and are still in high school, you can ask for help from the "School-to-Work Transition Program". DVR or CB will work with you, your parents, and your school teachers to plan for when you finish high school. Having a good plan for yourself after you finish high school will make things easier for you. It will also help your school teachers plan what they need to teach you so you are ready for adult life.

The second program is called "Supported Employment". This program is for people who have very severe disabilities and need help to get a job and keep a job for their whole lives. Before this program, people who had very severe disabilities usually did not work or worked only in sheltered workshops with other people like them. This new program will help people who have very severe disabilities. If you have a very severe disability, you can ask for services from the "Supported Employment" program.

Independent Living Services

Both DVR and CB may be able to give you help with living more independently. This help is called "independent living services". These services are different from the kind of services you may need to get a job. Independent living services can help you learn how to live on your own. They can teach you things like how to rent a place to live, how to shop for your food, how to manage your money, or how to use public transportation. They can teach you how to work with your disability and how to make changes that your disability needs. New Vistas Independent Living Center (NVILC) can also help you learn the same things. You can ask DVR or CB and NVILC for help at the same time. Each agency may be able to help you if you meet their eligibility rules.

If you want independent living services from DVR or CB, you must apply for services at the DVR or CB office closest to where you live. If your counselor decides you are not eligible for general DVR or CB services, then you can ask to be sent to the Independent Living Unit of DVR or CB. Your counselor will give your file to the Independent Living Unit (ILU). The ILU counselor will talk to you and decide if you are eligible for independent living services.

If you want help from New Vistas Independent Living Center (NVILC), you can call and make an appointment. NVILC will make a decision about whether or not they can help you. You do not have to apply at DVR or CB in order to get help from New Vistas Independent Living Center.

Working With Your Counselor

When you ask for services from one of the rehabilitation agencies we have talked about, you will be given a counselor. Your counselor will decide if you are eligible for services. Your DVR or CB counselor will make arrangements for you to take medical, psychological, and job tests. Each test your counselor wants you to take will help your counselor decide if you are Your counselor can ask you to take any test he or she thinks is important. If you refuse to take any of those tests, your counselor can close your case. It is important that you cooperate with your counselor and work together. You have a right to get a copy of the results of every test you take.

You and your counselor will make a plan that is special to you. It is important that you and your counselor work well together. You and your counselor will have to agree on your plan before you can get services.

The law says that DVR, CB, PWI, and NVILC have the responsibility to help you get or keep a job or live more independently. The law also says that you have some responsibilities. One important responsibility is to cooperate with your counselor. Some suggestions to help you work well with your counselor are on the next page.

How to Work Well with your Counselor

* Learn your counselor's name.

* Learn how to get hold of your counselor. Find out the best time to call your counselor.

* Keep every appointment you make with your counselor. If something happens and you can not keep an appointment, call your counselor as soon as possible and change your appointment. If you are supposed to call your counselor, that is an appointment too. Be sure to call your counselor when you say you will.

* Let your counselor know what is happening to you. When you have problems it is important to tell your counselor so he or she can help you fix the problem.

* Do not make decisions without talking to your counselor first. If you make a decision that costs money without talking with your counselor first, he or she may not be able to help you pay the cost. Make sure you get an "ok" before you do something that you want your rehabilitation agency to pay for.

* Ask your counselor to write down special help or services he or she is trying to get for you. Read your DVR or CB file every few months. Make sure your agreements are written down in your file.

* Ask your counselor to explain anything you don't understand.

* Tell your counselor if you need a Spanish or sign language interpreter. DVR or CB will pay for an interpreter if you need one.

* Tell your counselor if you have a problem reading.

* Be polite to your counselor. Your counselor will be a big help to you if you are polite. You do not have to always agree with your counselor. But, do not yell at your counselor, or call your counselor names. If you become angry at your counselor, and you want someone to help you, you can ask the CAP to help with the problem.

* Tell your counselor the truth. Your counselor must be able to trust you. If you do not tell the truth, your counselor will not be able to help you.

Sometimes people have a hard time getting along. If you have problems getting along with your counselor it is very important that you try to work through the problems. You should first try to talk with your counselor. Many times the only problem is because you and your counselor have not talked clearly with each other. If you still have a problem, after you have talked with your counselor, you can ask the CAP for help. The CAP may be able to help you and your counselor talk together better. Sometimes, no matter how hard a person tries, a problem cannot be worked through. If you have a problem with your counselor that cannot be fixed, you have the right to ask for a different counselor.

You need to be sure that the problem you have with your counselor cannot be worked through before you ask for a new counselor. Asking for a new counselor is a big step. You must make sure that is the only answer to your problem before you do it. The CAP can help you if you have problems getting a new counselor when you need one.

The way you and your counselor get along is very important. Your counselor is the one who will help you decide on a goal. He or she will also work with you to make an IWRP. He or she will do all the paper work for your plan. Your counselor will be the person who approves your plan. It is important that you do your best to work well with your counselor. If you meet your responsibilities that we talked about above, you will have a good chance to work well with your counselor.

SOME THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE DVR AND CB PROCESS

* Your appointment for an initial interview (Intake) may be delayed because of staff shortages or overloads. If you have not received a date for your first interview within one month of sending your application, you should contact your DVR office.

* Counselors have up to four months to make an eligiblity determination. Counselors may not make an eligibility determination until they have received all reports If you have current medical reports give them to your counselor at the initial interview. This will speed up your eligibility determination.

* You play a primary role in developing your Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP). If your counselor instructs you to apply for "similar benefits" (SSI, SSDI, Food Stamps, General Assistance Scholarships, grants, etc.) do so immediately. "You must show evidence that you have applied for all available benefits. The more information you give your counselor, the faster your IWRP will be completed.

* Any goods or equipment you need that costs more than $250.00 must go through the State Purchasing Office and be placed for bid. This may cause delay in receiving the items you need. Your counselor does not have control over this process. Plan ahead.

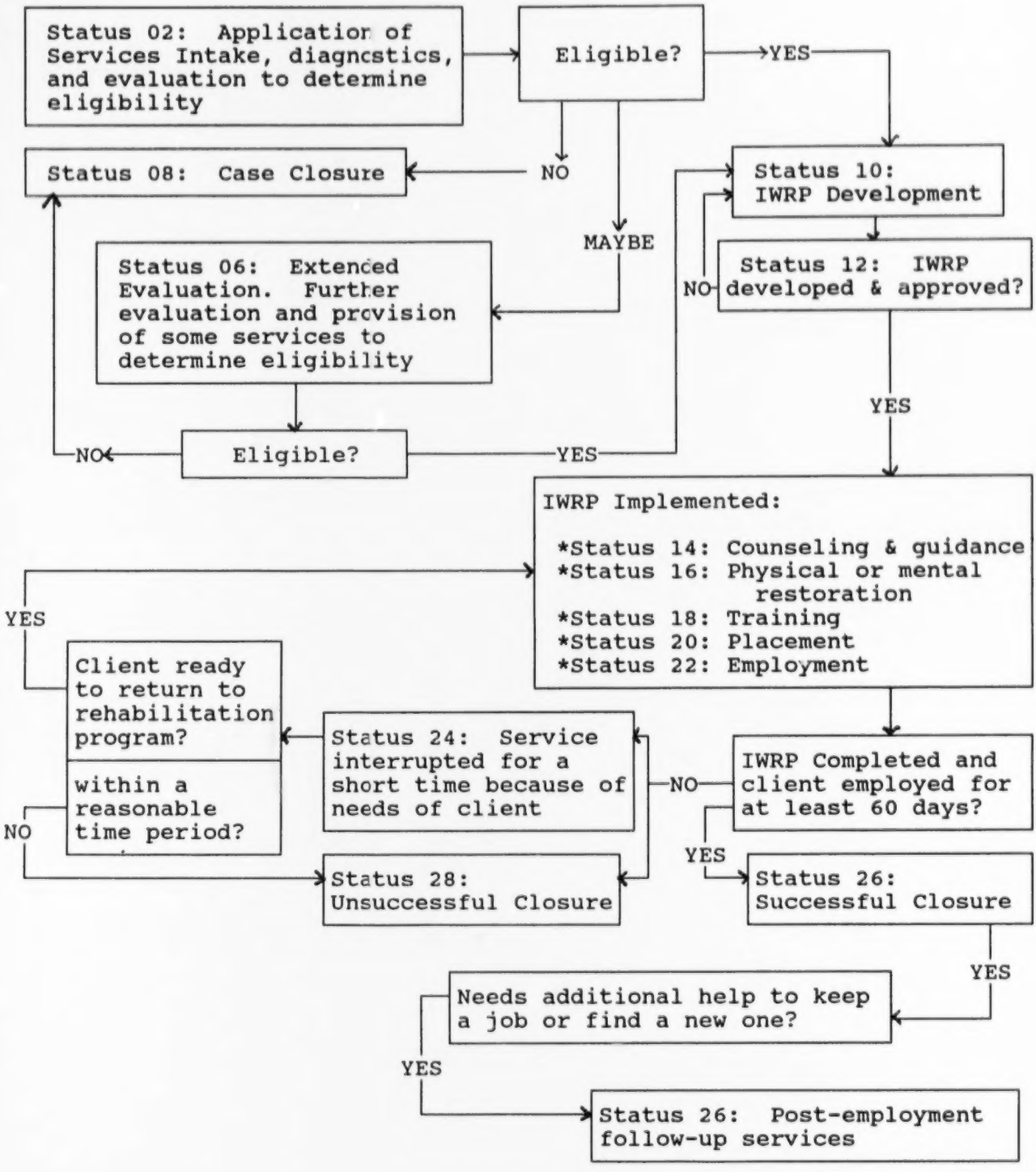
* Your counselor must have regular reports on your progress (evaluations, grades, etc.). You are responsible for getting these reports to your counselor in a timely manner.

* If you have problems with service vendors (schools, training sites, equipment providers, etc.) inform your counselor immediately.

* DVR and CB will only pay for services that they have approved. No one else has the authority to approve payment, send you to specialists for treatment, or arrange other services. If you want DVR or CB to pay for something, you must obtain approval in advance.

* Your counselor will be informally evaluating you at all times. Present yourself well.

DVR AND CB PROCESS


Status 02: Application of Services Intake, diagnostics, and evaluation to determine eligibility
Eligible?
YES
NO
Status 08: Case Closure
MAYBE
Status 10: IWRP Development
Status 06: Extended Evaluation. Further evaluation and provision of some services to determine eligibility
NO
Status 12: IWRP developed & approved?
YES
NO
Eligible?
YES
IWRP Implemented:
*Status 14: Counseling & guidance
*Status 16: Physical or mental restoration
*Status 18: Training
*Status 20: Placement
*Status 22: Employment
YES
Client ready to return to rehabilitation program?
within a reasonable time period?
NO
Status 24: Service interrupted for a short time because of needs of client
NO
IWRP Completed and client employed for at least 60 days?
YES
Status 28: Unsuccessful Closure
Status 26: Successful Closure
YES
Needs additional help to keep a job or find a new one?
YES
Status 26: Post-employment follow-up services

SELF-ADVOCACY

Self-advocacy means standing up for yourself. You have rights and responsibilities when you become a client of any rehabilitation agency. Sometimes you will have problems with the agency where you are a client. You may need to protect your rights. You may need to make sure you get the services you want. Sometimes, when you have problems, you may want help from the CAP. Most of the time, however, you can be a self-advocate and stand up for yourself. CAP can also help you learn how to be a self-advocate.

Being a self-advocate can be scary. When you stand up for yourself, other people can become upset with you. It is normal to be afraid when other people are upset with you. Everyone feels afraid when that happens. If you learn how to be a self-advocate, you will feel less afraid.

Know What You Need

The first step to becoming a good self-advocate is to know what you need. Every rehabilitation agency we have talked about has different things it may be able to help you with. You need to know what things each agency can do for you. You need to know which of those things you need.

There is a difference between things you need and things you want. For example, you may want a TV. But, a TV will not help you get a job. Your rehabilitation agency would not be able to buy you a TV. The TV is something you want, but it is not something you need. Remember that each rehabilitation agency has goals. The agencies will help you find a job and keep a job, or they will help you with independent living skills. The agencies can help you only with those goals. You need to know what you need in order to find a job, keep a job, or live more independently. When you know what you need, then you will know what to ask the rehabilitation agency to do for you. On the next page, you can learn about independent living skills that you may need.

Independent Living Skills

Here are some questions that will help you decide if you need to learn independent living skills. Answer each question.

	YES	NO
1. Do you need to learn how to get someone to help you with bathing, dressing, eating, and other daily skills?		
2. Do you need to learn how to buy food and clothes?		
3. Do you need to learn how to take care of your money?		
4. Do you need to talk to someone about your disability?		
5. Do you need to learn how to find and pay for your own house or apartment?		
6. Do you need to learn how to use the bus?		
7. Do you need to learn how to cook?		
8. Do you need to learn how to clean the place where you live?		
9. Do you need to learn how to keep your clothes clean and neat?		
10. Do you need to learn how to find a doctor or a dentist?		
11. Do you need to learn how to call the police or fire department if you need them?		
12. Do you need to learn how to pay your bills?		

If you answered "yes" to any of the questions above, you need to learn independent living skills. These skills will help you take care of yourself. They will also help you get ready for a job.

Deciding on a Job

When you are ready to get a job, you need to decide what job you want. You have a right to choose the job you want. You should choose a job that you can do. You do not have to know how to do the job. But, you need to choose a job that you can learn to do. You need to choose a job that your disability will not stop you from doing. For example, a deaf person cannot be a telephone operator. Telephone operators must be able to hear. Your disability may stop you from doing some kinds of work. You need to choose a job that you can do.

DVR, CB, and PWI are the agencies that help people find a job and keep a job. Your counselor can help you decide what job you want. Your counselor can help you decide what job you can do. You make the decision. Your counselor cannot make the decision without you.

You can also get help to decide what job you want from other places. All libraries have books that will tell you about many different jobs. You can ask your friends and family to tell you about jobs they know about. If you think you would like a job, you can talk to people who work in that job now. They can tell you about the job. Take your time about deciding what job you want. Be sure that you like the job you choose and that you can do that job. Write down what job you want here:

_____

When you have decided what job you want, you are ready to decide what you need to get that job. Here are some questions that will help you decide what you need to get the job you want. Answer each question. The answers you write down will help you know what to ask DVR or CB to do for you.

	Yes	No
1. Do you need to learn how to do the job you want?		
2. Do you need help with rent or food while you are learning the job you want?		
3. Do you need help with transportation while you are learning the job you want?		
4. Do you need special equipment to help you learn the job you want?		
5. Do you need a personal care attendant while you are learning the job you want?		
6. Do you need a sign language interpreter or a reader while you are learning the job you want?		
7. Do you need a doctor to help you with your disability for your job?		
8. Do you need help finding where to go to get the job you want?		
9. If you already have the job you want, do you need help to keep it?		

DVR or CB may be able to help you with any question on the last page that you answered "yes" to. If you answered "yes" to any questions, you should ask DVR or CB to help you. For example, if you answered "yes" to the first question, you need to ask DVR or CB to help you learn how to do the job you want. You should do the same thing with all the questions you answered "yes".

Sometimes DVR or CB will ask you to help pay for the help they give you. They will ask you to share the cost of training or other services. You do not have to pay for all of it. But you do need to pay for what you can. If you think DVR or CB is not being fair to you, you can ask the CAP for help. But remember that every person is different. Each person will get different things from DVR or CB. If a friend of yours gets certain things, do not think that you will get the same things. Everyone is different.

Know Your Rights

The law gives you special rights. You need to know what your rights are so you can protect them. A right is something that other people are not allowed to take away from you. Some rights are about employment. Other rights are about rehabilitation agencies we have talked about. When you become a client of a rehabilitation agency, the law gives you some special rights:

You have a right to be treated with courtesy and respect. Your counselor should be polite with you. He or she should treat you with respect. He or she may not put you down or make you feel that you are stupid or worthless. You must treat your counselor with courtesy and respect too.

You have a right to choose your own job. The law says that you and your counselor, together, will decide what job is best for you. This means you have the right to choose the job you want. Your counselor can give you suggestions or help in choosing the job you want. If you choose a job you cannot do your counselor has the right to say, "no". If you choose a job you can do, or a job you can learn to do, you make the final decision.

You have a right to get the help you need in order to get the job you want. Not everyone will get the same kind of help. But, you have the right to get the help you need. When you ask for help make sure that you really need it. You must make sure that the help you ask for is needed for you to learn a job, get a job, or keep a job.

You have a right to see your file and get a copy of your file. When you become a client of a rehabilitation agency, the agency will keep records about you. You have a right to see all the records that talk about you. You also have a right to get a copy of your file.

You have a right to confidentiality. Confidentiality means that your records belong to you and no one can show them to other people without your "ok". Before your counselor can show your records to people outside of the rehabilitation agency, your counselor must ask you if that is okay. If you say, "no", then, your counselor cannot show your records to other people.

You have a right to ask the Client Assistance Program (CAP) for help. When you have problems with your rehabilitation agency, you should first try to fix the problem yourself. You should stand up for yourself and your rights. But, if you have a hard time working through the problem, you can ask the CAP for help.

You have the right to ask for a new counselor. Sometimes people have personal problems when they work together. If you have a personal problem with your counselor, and you cannot work through the problem by talking with your counselor, you have the right to ask for a different counselor.

You have a right to understand why your counselor makes the decision he or she makes. Your counselor is responsible for writing your rehabilitation plan. Your plan may have some things in it that you do not understand. You have a right to ask your counselor to explain everything about your plan. You have a right to know why your counselor wrote your plan the way he or she did.

Sometimes a rehabilitation agency will tell a person that he or she is not eligible for services. If this happens to you, you have a right to know why you are not eligible. You also have a right to know what you can do to make yourself eligible for services.

When you know your rights, you can be a good self-advocate. Rehabilitation agencies were set up to help you. You have the right to make your own decisions and get the help you need. You have the right to be treated with courtesy and respect. You are an adult, or a young adult, and you should be treated like an adult.

Know your responsibilities

A responsibility is something that you must do. If something is your responsibility it means that no one can do it for you. You must do it yourself. With each of the rehabilitation agencies we have talked about, you have some special rights. You also have some responsibilities. If you do not keep your responsibilities, then the rehabilitation agency may not be able to help you. It is important that you know your responsibilities and keep them. When you do that you can get the help you need. Here are your responsibilities:

You have a responsibility to treat your counselor with courtesy and respect. No one likes it when another person is mean and rude to them. Your counselor must treat you with courtesy and respect. You must, also, treat your counselor with courtesy and respect. This means that you are polite, that you do not yell or scream at your counselor, and that you do not use bad words with your counselor. Your counselor will try to do what he or she thinks is best for you. Sometimes you will agree with your counselor. Sometimes you will not agree. But, even if you do not agree with your counselor, you must be polite. You have a right to disagree. You do not have a right to be rude or mean.

You have a responsibility to keep your appointments with your counselor. The law says that you must meet with your counselor. You and your counselor, together, are a team. You cannot get help without your counselor. This means you must meet with your counselor. If you cannot keep your appointment with your counselor, you must call and cancel the appointment. You must make a new appointment. When DVR or CB accepts you as a client it means you must show responsibility. People who cannot be responsible cannot get a job. If they cannot get a job, then, DVR or CB will not be able to help them. It is very important that you keep your appointments and show that you are a responsible person.

You have a responsibility to tell the truth. Your counselor has to know what is happening in your life. If your counselor does not know, then, he or she cannot help you with problems you have. Your counselor is not a mind-reader. He or she will not know what you need if you do not tell the truth about what is happening in your life. You need to give your counselor the information he or she needs in order to help you.

You have a responsibility to follow through on what you say you will do. When your counselor writes your rehabilitation plan, the plan will include what DVR or CB will do for you. It will also include what you must do in order to complete your plan. If you do not do what you promise you will do, then, your counselor will not be able to help you. You must keep your promises and do what you say you will do. You should not make a promise you cannot keep. If something happens that stops you from keeping your promise, then, you should call your counselor and let him or her know what is going on.

You have a responsibility to tell your counselor why you do things or why you made a certain decision. You have a right to understand why your counselor makes the decision he or she makes. Your counselor has the same right. He or she has the right to understand why you make the decisions you make. You have a responsibility to explain your decisions and feelings so your counselor will understand. Sometimes this is hard to do. Many people have problems telling someone else why they do things or how they feel. It is important that your counselor understands you. He or she cannot give you good help if he or she does not understand you. You have a responsibility to help your counselor understand you. If you learn how to help your counselor understand you, this will also help you when you get a job. You will be able to help your boss and other workers understand you and your disability. This will make things easier for you when you go to work.

The rehabilitation agencies we have talked about should not break the law. They must make sure that they do not ignore your rights. You must make sure that you keep your responsibilities. Each side has certain things it must do. You must be sure that you know your responsibilities and keep them. If your rehabilitation agency ignores your rights, you can ask the CAP for help.

Know how to keep records

"Keeping records" means keeping track of information somewhere other than in your mind. It means putting information on paper to help you remember what has happened. Almost everyone keeps records to help them remember what has happened, or what their appointments are for the future. When you become a client of a rehabilitation program, it is very important to keep good records. The records will help you remember what happened and will also help if you and your counselor do not agree about what happened.

Sometimes you may remember things differently than your counselor. You and your counselor may disagree about what has happened or about what promises were made. If you keep good records you will be able to prove the truth. Sometimes you may be wrong. Sometimes your counselor will be wrong. Your records will help prove what really happened. If you keep good records, you will remember better and you will be able to prove the truth.

What kind of records should you keep? On the next page is a list of some important things to make a record of.

Keep Records of

***Phone calls.** When you make a phone call to your counselor, you should write down the day and time of the call. You should also write down what the call was about. Keep your record of phone calls together in a notebook.

***Letters.** When you get a letter from your rehabilitation agency, you should keep the letter. Never throw a letter away that your counselor or your agency has sent to you. Keep all your letters from your counselor or agency together in the same place.

***Meetings.** When you meet with your counselor, you should write down the day and time of the meeting. You should also write down what the meeting was about and what you and your counselor decided. Keep your records of meetings together in a notebook.

***YOU.** You should keep a notebook about your past experiences, your abilities, your education, your past jobs, and what you are doing to find a job. You need a record about yourself because it will help you decide what you want your rehabilitation agency to do for you. It will also help you get a job. Employers want to know about you before they hire you. You need to have information about you together in one place so you are ready to answer any questions.

Know about people

Getting along with people is important in order to be successful. Everyone must learn how to get along with other people. Some of the things people do you will like. Other things people do you will dislike. But, in order to be successful, you need to learn how to get along with other people even when they do things you do not like. Learning how people work, or learning why people do the things they do takes a long time.

Getting along with other people does not mean always doing what they want you to do. It does not mean that you let them make decisions for you. It does mean learning how to explain yourself and how to stand up for yourself in ways that are good for you and for the other people you work with. You can stand up for yourself and still get along with other people. You can make your own decisions and people will still like you.

You must learn about authority. Authority means power to do something. Everyone has some kinds of authority.

When you become a client of a rehabilitation agency, you need to remember about authority. Your counselor has authority to decide about your eligibility and your rehabilitation plan. You and your counselor should work together to make decisions about your plan.

Some people become upset when they have to work with someone who has authority. They will become angry and rude to that

person. If you feel this way when you work with your counselor, you may have a problem. You need your counselor in order to get the help you need. It is important to work together. Just because your counselor has authority does not mean that you cannot make decisions for yourself. You can and you should. You and your counselor are a team. You have authority over some things. Your counselor has authority over other things. You need to work together to make good things happen.

You need to learn about attitude. Attitude means the way you feel about something. The way you feel about something is very important. Your attitude decides how you will behave. When you become a client of a rehabilitation agency, your behavior is very important. Most of the time other people will act toward you the way you act toward them. If you act in a good way, other people will usually act in a good way with you. If you act in a bad way, other people will not want to work with you.

You need to learn about compromise. Compromise is needed when two people do not agree with each other. Compromise means giving up one thing in order to get another thing. It means trading one thing for another. For example, if your counselor wants you to go to Pizza Hut for a job and you want to go to school you do not agree with each other. Compromise means you talk it over with each other and decide something that both of you can live with. Maybe, after you talk it over, you decide that you will work part-time at Pizza Hut and take one class at school. Compromise means that both people get some of what they want. In the example, both people would get some of what they wanted. Compromise does not mean that you will get everything you want. It means each of you are willing to give up some things in order to get other things that are more important.

You need to learn how to compromise in order to work well with other people. No one always agrees with everyone else. There are always disagreements. You will probably disagree with your counselor about something. Your counselor will probably disagree with you about something else. When disagreement happens, it is important to know how to compromise. The next page shows how to compromise.

HOW TO COMPROMISE

*Decide what things are most important to you.

*Decide what things you can give up without making you feel angry.

*Listen to the other person carefully.

*Decide what things the other person thinks are important.

*Decide what things the other person will give up without making him or her feel angry.

*Compare your list of things with the other person's list of things.

*Make a decision together.

You need to learn about anger. Everyone gets angry. It is normal to feel angry when you are afraid or hurt. There are good ways to show your anger and there are bad ways to show your anger. It is important to learn good ways to show your anger.

Many people become afraid or angry when someone else is angry. If you become angry with your counselor, it would be normal for your counselor to become angry also. That is how people work. It works the same way for you, too. If someone is angry at you, you probably feel angry or scared. Here are some suggestions for showing your anger in a good way:

DON'T	DO
*yell or scream	*talk quietly and carefully
*be rude	*explain how you feel and why
*interrupt	*give the other person a chance to talk
*walk out	*try to compromise
*make threats	*keep a record of what you and your counselor said
*blame	*get help if you need it from CAP

You need to learn when to get help. Some problems cannot be fixed without help. Sometimes people cannot compromise with each other. Sometimes, even when you know about authority, and you are courteous and respectful, the other person does not act right. Even when you have a good attitude, you may find problems that you cannot work through.

When you have done your best to work with a person, and there are still problems, that is the time to get help. You should not wait until everything is very bad. You need to look ahead and see what will happen with a problem. If you see that the problem is going to get bigger that is the time to get help.

You can get help from your family or your friends. Sometimes family or friends can give you good advice that will help your problem. Sometimes you can get help from your counselor or from your counselor's boss. But, sometimes, you will need help from outside. You can call the CAP for help. The people who work at the CAP are called client advocates. They have experience and training that can help you work through the problems you may have with your rehabilitation agency. Help from the CAP is free. You do not have to pay anything. In the Albuquerque area, the phone number for the Client Assistance Program is 888-0111 (Albuquerque). From other towns in New Mexico, you can call CAP for free at this phone number 1-800-432-4682.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Self-advocacy means standing up for yourself. Becoming your own advocate takes time. You can learn how to be your own advocate. You should practice being your own advocate. You can do it. You can be a great self-advocate!

When a problem comes up with your rehabilitation agency, there are some things you should do to be a good self-advocate. Before you start to work on your problem, you need to:

***Decide what you need;**

***Know your rights;**

***Keep your responsibilities; and,**

***Keep good records.**

You should start doing all four things on the list above as soon as you apply to become a client of a rehabilitation agency. If you wait to do these things until you have a problem, your problem will end up very big and hard to fix. If you do these four things from the start, you will have smaller problems and your problems will be easier to fix.

Everyone has problems. When you have a problem with your rehabilitation agency, do not feel alone. Problems happen for everyone. Problems are normal parts of life. You are not a bad person because you have problems. Good people have problems, too.

Part of living is learning how to work with problems. When a problem happens to you, you will feel angry, or sad, or unhappy. Those feelings are normal. When you fix your problem, you will feel great! You can learn how to fix problems for yourself. It will take time and practice.

The next page is a worksheet to help you plan how to fix a problem that happens to you. If you answer each question, you will be able to figure out how to work with your problem.

PROBLEM WORKSHEET

When a problem happens to you, you need to think of a way to fix the problem so it does not hurt you. If you answer the following questions, you will be able to think of a plan to work through your problem. You may want to talk over your answers with someone before you write them down.

1. What is my problem? _____

_____

_____.

2. Why did this problem happen? (Cause) _____

_____

_____.

3. What will fix my problem? (Solution) _____

_____

_____.

4. Who can help me fix my problem? (Person who can provide solution) _____

_____

_____.

5. What things should I do to fix my problem? (Plan) _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THE CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP)

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) is set up to help persons with disabilities. When a person has a problem with DVR, CB, NVILC, or PWI, the CAP can help fix the problem. The CAP can also give information about other kinds of programs that can help people with disabilities. Any person with disabilities can ask the CAP for information about programs that can help them.

CAP Services

The CAP gives help and information to any person with a disability about programs that can help them, such as: Social Security, Welfare, or Vocational Rehabilitation. The information is free. The CAP also gives help to people who are clients of any rehabilitation agency we have talked about in this manual. The CAP will also help people who are interested in becoming clients of a rehabilitation agency. The next page shows the services CAP gives.

The Client Assistance Program helps people by:

* giving free information about agencies and programs that can help them.

* giving free information about rehabilitation agencies and how to get services from them.

* teaching persons with disabilities how to be self-advocates.

* helping work through problems that happen between clients and their rehabilitation agencies.

* acting for clients in the appeals process.

* acting for clients of rehabilitation agencies in court.

The CAP cannot give all of these services to everyone, but you have a right to talk about your rehabilitation problem with a CAP advocate.

Every person is different and will need different things from the CAP. When someone calls the CAP with a problem, the people who work for the CAP will take the information. The people who work for the CAP are called advocates. The CAP advocate will decide if the person really does have a problem and if the CAP can help with the problem. If the CAP can help with the problem, then, the advocate will work with the person until the problem is solved.

Getting CAP services

The CAP will give information to any person with a disability in the state of New Mexico. But, if you have a problem you want CAP help with, you must have a problem with a rehabilitation agency. You must be a client of DVR, CB, NVILC, or PWI, or you must want to become a client of one of these agencies. If you have a problem with Social Security, the CAP cannot help you. CAP can only help you if you have a problem with a rehabilitation agency.

Getting help from the CAP is easy. You call the CAP and ask to talk to one of the advocates. That's all. The advocate will take your information, fill out some forms, and then will tell you how the CAP can help you. You do not have to pay for CAP help. The CAP services are free. The CAP's phone number is 888-0111 (Albuquerque) or 1-800-432-4682 (other towns in New Mexico).

APPEALS PROCESS
FOR
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
Commission for the Blind (CB)

Step 1. Your counselor makes a decision you do not agree with. You try to work through the problem with your counselor, but cannot agree together.

Step 2. **Supervisory Review.*** You ask to talk with your counselor's boss. You tell your disagreement to your counselor's boss. Your counselor will tell his or her side of the disagreement, too. The boss will make a decision and will tell you the decision. If you do not agree with the decision, you can go to step 3.

Step 3. **Administrative Review.*** You ask to talk with the Chief of Field Services. The Chief is the boss of all the supervisors. You tell the Chief your side. Your counselor and your counselor's boss will tell their side, too. The Chief will make a decision and will tell you the decision. If you do not agree with the decision, you can go to step 4.

Step 4. **Fair Hearing.** You ask to talk with a Fair Hearing Officer. The Officer is someone outside of DVR and CB and does not know anything yet about you or your problem. The officer will listen to your problem. The Officer will listen to DVR's or CB's side. DVR's lawyer will tell DVR's side. A Fair Hearing is like a court trial. It may be very hard for you to do on your own. You may want someone else to tell your side for you. If you do, you can ask the CAP for help. After the Officer has listened to everyone, he or she will make a decision and tell you the decision.

Step 5. **Fair Hearing Review.** The Director of DVR or CB can review the decision made by the Fair Hearing Officer. If the Director decides to review the decision, he must tell you that he is reviewing the decision. He must give you a chance to tell him your side or add other things that will help you. The Director's decision is final unless you go to court (Step 6).

Step 6. Sometimes the decision that is made is against you. You may still believe you have been treated unfairly. If you go through all the steps above, and the decision is against you, you can go to court. The CAP can advise you about whether you have a good case for court. The CAP can act for you in court. But, the CAP will make a decision about acting for you. If the CAP decides not to act for you, and you want to go to court, the CAP will give you names of good lawyers that will help you.

*You can ask for a Fair Hearing any time you do not agree with a decision that is made about your rehabilitation plan. It is best to go through Steps 1, 2, and 3 before asking for a Fair Hearing. But, you can ask for a Fair Hearing without going through Steps 2 and 3.